United Nations A/72/99

General Assembly

Distr.: General
20 June 2017

Original: English

Seventy-second session
Item 101 (c) of the preliminary list*
Review and implementation of the Concluding Document of the Twelfth Special Session of the General Assembly

United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report provides an overview of the activities of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean from July 2016 to June 2017.

During that period, the Regional Centre undertook more than 60 technical, legal and policy assistance activities to assist Latin American and Caribbean States, at their request, with the implementation of international instruments relating to conventional arms and weapons of mass destruction.

With a view to supporting the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons (International Tracing Instrument), the Regional Centre provided technical training to more than 600 personnel of the national authorities of Member States on the marking, tracing, stockpile management and destruction of small arms. Through community outreach initiatives and technical assistance, the Centre raised the awareness of the general public and a number of private security companies about small arms control and the prevention of armed violence. The Centre worked with four Central and South American States on strengthening their implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty.

During the reporting period, the Regional Centre provided legislative, policy and capacity-building assistance to more than 280 national officials in Latin America and the Caribbean to enhance the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) on preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery to non-State actors. The Centre also developed tools to aid States in preventing the financing of proliferation and in preparing control lists to counter

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the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and provided capacity-building assistance to prevent proliferation in the context of maritime and port security.

The Secretary-General expresses his gratitude to the Member States and other partners that supported the Regional Centre's operation and programmes with financial and in-kind contributions, in particular the host country, Peru, and calls upon those in a position to do so to make voluntary contributions to the Centre in order to sustain its activities in response to increasing requests for assistance and cooperation from Member States in the region.

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 71/77, the General Assembly reiterated its strong support for the role of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean in the promotion of peace, disarmament and development among its Member States, and encouraged the Centre to further develop programmes in all countries of the region in the important areas of peace, disarmament and development, and to provide, upon request and in accordance with its mandate, support for Member States' initiatives in those areas at the regional and subregional levels.

2. The General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on the implementation of the resolution at its seventy-second session. In the present report, submitted pursuant to that request, the main activities carried out by the Regional Centre from July 2016 to June 2017 are highlighted. A financial statement on the status of the Trust Fund for the Centre in 2016 is contained in the annex to the present report.

II. Functioning and mandate

3. The Regional Centre, located in Lima, was established in 1987, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 41/60 J. It is mandated to provide, at their request, substantive support for the initiatives and other activities of the Member States in the region for the implementation of measures for peace and disarmament and for the promotion of economic and social development.

III. Main areas of activity

4. During the reporting period, the Regional Centre undertook more than 60 technical, legal and training assistance activities to support the efforts by States in the region in their implementation of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation instruments and adherence to international standards and norms in those fields.

5. With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Regional Centre aligned its activities to support the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 16 ("Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels"). Within this context, the Centre launched a new project in Colombia, Honduras, Peru and Trinidad and Tobago to boost the participation of youth in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Furthermore, as part of a multi-agency project, the Centre worked with 800 adolescents in northern Peru to raise their awareness about the dangers of firearms. As part of that project, the Centre also lent technical assistance, resulting in the destruction of close to 10,000 confiscated weapons.

6. In support of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, the Regional Centre launched a new X-ray identification training tool in Central America for use by front-line law enforcement officials to combat weapons-trafficking through the postal system. In addition, the Centre bolstered State capacity to undertake forensic ballistic work, in nine Caribbean States, in alignment with the International Tracing Instrument. As part of a project to improve small arms control within the private security sector, the Centre helped to destroy more than 450 small arms held by private security companies and supported the secondary marking of more than 500

weapons held by such companies, while training close to 250 Government officials and private security company personnel.

7. With a view to informing public debate, the Regional Centre published two new regional studies, one on the status of control over the private security sector, the other on the feasibility and impact of the use of less lethal weapons as alternatives to gun use.

8. In a significant development, the Regional Centre provided, upon the request of the United Nations Mission in Colombia, technical input into and guidance on the laying down of arms component of the Colombian peace process. That intervention marked the first time that the Centre provided assistance to a United Nations peace operation.

9. Likewise, the Regional Centre continued to impart training and technical assistance to more than 125 officials from four countries in Latin America in an effort to strengthen State implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty.

10. In order to support the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), the Regional Centre assisted eight States in drafting new legislation and defining national priorities for voluntary national implementation action plans. The Centre also developed new technical guidelines on combating the financing of proliferation and adopting national control lists to support States' efforts to counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

11. Furthermore, the Regional Centre also continued its efforts to promote the participation of women in disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation initiatives, in line with General Assembly resolution 65/69 on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. Overall, 40 per cent of the participants in the Centre's activities were women, an increase from the previous reporting period.

A. Public security programme

1. Youth: agents of change to advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the Sustainable Development Goals

12. The 2030 Agenda recognizes that "children and young women and men are critical agents of change". In support of this, the Regional Centre, in collaboration with the United Nations Volunteer programme, launched a project to create spaces for young people to enhance their knowledge of Sustainable Development Goal 16 and engage in meaningful dialogue on peace, security and civic participation. Four countries (Colombia, Honduras, Peru and Trinidad and Tobago) are partnering with the Centre to develop the first set of community-based indicators for Sustainable Development Goal target 16.4 ("By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime").

13. The link between youth and peace and security issues was also maintained throughout a multi-agency project in northern Peru, in August 2016, during which the Regional Centre gathered 800 adolescents for theatrical dance performances to raise their awareness about the dangers of firearms use. Through artistic dance and urban music, the young performers recreated stories epitomizing the impact of firearm use on local communities.

14. The project likewise contributed to the empowerment and security of youth and women through exploratory dialogue, in particular on the gender-specific impact of armed violence, with community-based stakeholders. In support of that approach, in July 2016, the Centre shared its accumulated expertise on prevention

strategies to address armed violence at a seminar on reducing the elevated levels of violence in Peru's northern city of Trujillo.

15. This multifaceted project also encompassed collaboration with the national law enforcement community and the national regulatory entity for security services, firearms, ammunition and explosives for civil use of Peru, resulting in the destruction of close to 10,000 weapons. That activity, which coincided with Small Arms Destruction Day, 9 July 2016, showcased the ongoing efforts of Peru to rid vulnerable communities of confiscated weapons and reduce the risk of their diversion and misuse.

2. Combating weapons trafficking through the postal service

16. For well over two decades, the law enforcement community across the region has both provided and received technical assistance from the Regional Centre. During the period covered by the present report, the Centre continued to work with front-line responders to mitigate the diversion of weapons through training initiatives and the provision of practical tools.

17. In March 2017, 40 Costa Rican law enforcement officials benefited from specialized training to facilitate the detection and interception of small arms, parts, components and ammunition that are trafficked through the post. The course made use of the Regional Centre's newest training tool: an X-ray identification guide developed in collaboration with the Switzerland-based Center for Adaptive Security and Research Applications. The pioneering guide provides postal and customs agents with the ability to detect and identify weapons that are shipped illicitly through the postal service. The guide will help to counter this new trafficking modality, which to date has been virtually uncontrolled.

18. In a clear example of the impact of the Regional Centre's course, Costa Rican authorities who had participated in the training later intercepted two packages, containing a total of 20 rifle magazines being trafficked through the post. The Centre is collaborating with the Universal Postal Union and the Postal Union for the Americas, Spain and Portugal to expand the course, and during the reporting period received numerous requests from other States in the region for such training.

3. Improving small arms tracing capacity

19. The Regional Centre continued to support the strengthening of national firearms ballistics systems in eight Caribbean States (Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Trinidad and Tobago) in order to combat illicit trafficking in small arms, light weapons and ammunition. The main goals of the project are to standardize national forensic ballistic practices and strengthen regional information-sharing networks with the aim of reducing impunity in cases of illicit firearms use and trafficking. This assistance also contributed substantively to State implementation of both the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument.

20. Within the framework of this project, a regional meeting on forensic ballistics was held in December 2016 in Port of Spain, in cooperation with the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean Community Implementing Agency for Crime and Security. The participants highlighted the importance of quality management systems in laboratories, in support of the Regional Integrated Ballistic Information Network. The meeting was attended by 40 national representatives of 15 Caribbean States.

21. Within the reporting period, the Regional Centre also provided basic laboratory materials and high-tech equipment to firearms examiners and laboratory technicians,

along with on-site and online training, and facilitated the incorporation of 17 standard operating procedures into national systems. Fifty firearms examiners received an assessment tool, in order to be able to continuously improve their work-related competencies.

22. The overall impact of forensic ballistics project interventions during the reporting period includes substantial improvements in the working conditions of firearms examiners as related to health and safety and in the security and organization of their workspaces, along with increasing the capacity of firearms examiners and laboratory technicians to efficiently manage the evidence entering the laboratories, in keeping with international standards.

4. Promoting small arms control practices among private security companies

23. International standards have also paved the way for a joint project intended to strengthen the capacities of the Governments of Member States to control small arms under the ownership of private security companies and promote good governance in that sector. The project, which is implemented in conjunction with the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, is aimed at addressing the ongoing increase in the privatization of security in the region through support for the application of the International Small Arms Control Standards, the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines and the International Code of Conduct for Private Security Service Providers.

24. As a result of the success of the project's first phase of implementation in El Salvador and Peru, it was expanded to include Costa Rica and Guatemala. Activities in Costa Rica led to the destruction, in April 2017, of more than 450 weapons held by 17 different companies, representing the first time that private security companies in Costa Rica voluntarily destroyed weapons. Legal assistance to national authorities as regards private security legislation and small arms control also fed into policy debates in Costa Rica and the legislative reform of private security company oversight and control.

25. Assistance to all beneficiary States also included seminars on a range of topics, including the use of force, and technical training sessions for project stakeholders, along with assessments of private security company-owned armouries and storage facilities, reaching close to 250 Government officials and private security company personnel.

26. In furtherance of the implementation of the International Tracing Instrument, the Regional Centre also supported the secondary marking of more than 500 private security company weapons in Costa Rica to improve the inventory management of the companies' weapons and, hence, increase the possibility of tracing them.

27. A joint study undertaken by the project's implementers, released in October 2016, contains recommendations on the approaches that States and private security companies could follow to strengthen the regulation, oversight and operations of the armed private security sector in Latin America and the Caribbean for the improved security of citizens in general. It also explores whether employees of private security firms need to be armed in order to deliver their services effectively.

28. In further contribution to this and other intense debates under way in the region, the Regional Centre engaged in exploratory research on the legality, feasibility and impact of using less lethal weapons as alternatives to using guns. The study findings were presented in Peru, in December 2016, and in Colombia, in April 2017. The results of the research provide a solid, evidence-based starting point for regulating the use of less lethal weapons by security sector companies in the region.

5. Supporting the peace process in Colombia

29. The United Nations Mission in Colombia sought assistance from the Regional Centre to contribute to the "laying down of arms" component of the historic peace process negotiated between the Colombian Government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army. The Centre initially offered support in the form of technical advice to the Mission in February 2017. To date, the Centre has provided input into technical and logistical planning for the laying down of arms and shared its expertise on methods and techniques for the deactivation of small arms and light weapons.

30. This initiative represents the first time that the Office for Disarmament Affairs, including its three Regional Centres, has contributed to a formal laying down of arms. The technical operating procedures developed by the Centre, which are based on international standards and best practices, such as the International Small Arms Control Standards and the United Nations SaferGuard programme's International Ammunition Technical Guidelines, have been applied throughout the implementation of the peace agreement.

B. Supporting the implementation of multilateral instruments relating to conventional arms and weapons of mass destruction

1. Arms Trade Treaty

31. The Regional Centre continued to lend support to strengthening State implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty through training courses and technical assistance provided to more than 50 national officials. In Colombia, the Centre helped to put into practice the Arms Trade Treaty provision calling for an "effective and transparent national control system" by convening, in April 2017, a technical seminar for Government officials to increase their understanding of international arms transfers and export risk assessment procedures. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, along with the Ministry of Defence, is leading efforts towards the adjustment of national procedures for an effective implementation of the Treaty once it is ratified by the Government of Colombia.

32. The Regional Centre also organized, in January 2017, a national round table in Guatemala for personnel of the national authority in charge of arms trade controls. At the round table, guidelines were provided on the creation and main functions of a national control authority responsible for arms trade, in compliance with the provisions of the Treaty.

33. International partners continued to call on the Regional Centre to share its expertise relating to the Arms Trade Treaty. For instance, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute and the Centre embarked on a joint initiative to develop an interactive database to map Arms Trade Treaty-related activities in the region with a view to identifying trends and gaps in assistance and thus bolstering the impact of future assistance. The German Federal Office for Economic Affairs and Export Control, in the context of its efforts to support the European Union Arms Trade Treaty outreach project, continued to look to the Centre to contribute to national dialogue on the development of Treaty road maps, with a particular focus on licensing structures and maintaining export control lists.

2. Security Council resolution 1540 (2004)

34. The Regional Centre provided support to nine States in the region in their implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). The support included the creation of an innovative guide and tools, legal and technical assistance in updating

legislative frameworks and assistance to States in defining national priorities for the implementation of the resolution. Practical training initiatives were also devised for effective response to weapons of mass destruction-related incidents at maritime ports.

35. The Regional Centre launched a first-of-its-kind guide to preparing control lists during a regional seminar on implementing resolution 1540 (2004), co-organized with the Organization of American States and held in Peru, in April 2017. That guide, which contains a focus list of weapons of mass destruction in the Caribbean region to facilitate the practical implementation of the control lists within a national context, identifies all the items from the main strategic trade control regimes that are recommended for inclusion in a national control list that complies with resolution 1540 (2004). The new tool will assist in the adoption of national control lists, thus contributing to the standardization of control measures throughout the region. The Centre benefited from the expert peer review by the World Customs Organization of the final version of the guide's components.

36. Tackling the financing of proliferation has become a priority for many countries seeking to address the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. To that end, in November and December 2016, the Regional Centre provided legal support to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago in its drafting of proliferation-financing laws, through drafting workshops. The classes were focused on the creation of new offence provisions to criminalize the financing of proliferation and introduce new penalties for such activities. Emphasis was placed on broadening the function, role and scope of the legal powers of the Financial Intelligence Unit of Trinidad and Tobago to enable regulation of the financing of proliferation and terrorism in addition to money laundering.

37. The Regional Centre held national a round table in Belize, in December 2016, Trinidad and Tobago, in December 2016, and Peru, in March 2017, to help States in identifying priorities for national implementation action plans to strengthen the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004). The action plans are currently in their final phase of development and are expected to be presented formally to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) in 2017.

38. In order to launch its assistance relating to resolution 1540 (2004) in Suriname, the Regional Centre conducted a national legal study evaluating the current status of that country's legislative implementation of the resolution. The findings and recommendations of the study were presented to a broad audience of Government stakeholders in April 2017, at a national round table held in Paramaribo. The legal study will provide a strong basis to assist the country in the preparation of its national implementation action plan, which is intended to commence in June 2017 with the Centre's support.

39. In collaboration with the International Maritime Organization, the Regional Centre organized, in December 2016, tabletop exercises in the Dominican Republic on risk management in the maritime domain. Twenty-five national authority personnel participated in the exercises. Crisis and risk management training, together with the development of protocols and contingency plans, were highlighted by the beneficiary State as priorities in the field of maritime security and in preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

IV. Financial situation, staffing and administration

A. Financial situation

40. The Regional Centre was established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 41/60 J on the basis of existing resources and voluntary contributions. In 2016, voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund of the Centre were received in the amount of $2,190,894. Information on the status of the Trust Fund for 2016 is contained in the annex to the present report.

41. The Secretary-General expresses his gratitude to the Governments of Canada, Germany, Guyana, Mexico and the United States of America for their financial contributions. Those contributions enabled the Regional Centre to continue to assist Member States in the region, at their request. He also expresses his appreciation to the Government of Peru for the long-standing financial and political support that it provides in its capacity as host country to the Centre.

42. The Secretary-General continues to encourage financial and in-kind contributions to the Regional Centre from Latin American and Caribbean States as a clear indication of the value that Member States attribute to the Centre's expertise and technical assistance.

43. The Secretary-General thanks all States and partners for their generous contributions to and support for the Regional Centre and encourages their ongoing support to ensure that the Centre can continue to provide technical and capacity-building assistance to Member States in the region, at their request, in fulfilment of its mandate.

B. Staffing and administration

44. The regular budget of the United Nations funds the posts of one Senior Political Affairs Officer/Director of the Centre (P-5), one Political Affairs Officer (P-3) and one General Service staff member (G-7 Local level).

45. Project personnel posts are funded through voluntary contributions. During the reporting period, cooperation between the Regional Centre and the United Nations Volunteers programme continued. The Centre recruited additional programmatic support personnel for its public security and non-proliferation and arms control programmes, including the aforementioned operational forensic ballistics project in the Caribbean and the private security project in Latin America. International consultants were contracted to assist with the creation of new tools and guides aimed at supporting the implementation of instruments relating to weapons of mass destruction, including Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

V. Conclusion

46. During the reporting period, the Regional Centre engaged in more than 60 substantive activities to support States in their implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms, the International Tracing Instrument, the Arms Trade Treaty and Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

47. The Regional Centre continued to expand its technical assistance in areas ranging from small arms and ammunition tracing and combating trafficking to improving physical security and stockpile management. The Centre also continued to support States in the strengthening of national frameworks on import and export

controls for conventional weapons and dual-use goods. The Centre supported States in their efforts to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction through the provision of legal assistance and capacity-building workshops, including on maritime and port security.

48. The Regional Centre promoted the participation and role of women in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control by ensuring that women make up at least 25 per cent of the participants at all its events, reaching approximately 800 women during the reporting period.

49. The Secretary-General again calls upon those Member States and other partners in a position to do so to provide the Regional Centre with the financial and in-kind support, including direct financial contributions from Latin American and Caribbean States, necessary for it to continue to carry out its mandate effectively and serve the needs of Member States in the region. The Secretary-General also encourages States to continue to fully utilize the Centre's expertise and experience in their joint efforts to promote peace, security and disarmament in the region.

Annex

Status of the Trust Fund for the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean for 2016

(United States dollars)

Accumulated surplus, 1 January 2016	**3 915 300**
Revenue	
Voluntary contributions	2 190 894[a]
Investment revenue	32 545
Other exchange revenue	–
Total revenue	**2 223 439**
Expenses	
Operating expenses	2 081 526
Depreciation and amortization	–
Total expenses	**2 081 526**
Surplus/(deficit)	141 913
Accumulated surplus/(deficit)	**4 057 213**

[a] Consists of voluntary contributions from donors as follows: Canada, $1,304,208; Germany, $620,427; Guyana, $1,031; Mexico, $5,000; Peru, $28,802; and the United States of America, $231,425.